REMARKS

In the Office Action dated April 27, 2004, the Examiner requested that a copy of the cited portion of the text edited by Morneburg be provided, and a copy of that excerpt is attached hereto. A translation of this excerpt is not readily available to the Applicant, however, the statements in the specification concerning this excerpt constitute a summary of its teachings. Applicant has not at this time submitted this excerpt in an Information Disclosure Statement, since to do so would require payment of a fee, and Applicant considers this text to be no more than general background information. If the Examiner wishes to make this reference officially of record, however, the Examiner of course is free to do so, and Applicant would have no objection to such action on the part of the Examiner.

Figure 1 was objected to because the Examiner stated the graphical symbols used therein required textural legends as well, and such legends have therefore been provided.

A number of objections with regard to claims 1-6 were raised under 37 C.F.R.§ 1.75(a), and claims 1, 4 and 5 have been amended to address those objections. The specification has been amended to explicitly refer to the viewing stations 11 as being used as the post-processing devices, consistent with the Examiner's assumption.

The monitor at which the camera image is mixed into the displayed examination image can be either the processing apparatus or the post-processing device of claim 1, or both. Claim 1 has been amended to make this clear. The claims also have been amended to make clear that the camera image (still image) is

mixed into the displayed examination image, in a window that is separate from the examination image.

The objections to the claims therefore are respectfully submitted to be overcome.

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Herzog and Kraft, in view of Alexandrescu. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

The subject matter disclosed and claimed in the present application concerns a clinical system with a number of imaging modalities that are connected via a communication network. Each imaging modality has a workstation already associated therewith, namely the viewing stations 5-8 in Figure 1. Post-processing devices 11 also are provided, which allow further processing of the images that have already been processed at the viewing stations 5-8. At any of the viewing stations (processing apparatus) or at the post-processing device, a camera is provided that acquires a still image of the environment of the viewing station (processing apparatus) or the environment of the post-processing device. This still image is mixed, in a window, together with the already-displayed examination image at the monitor of the respective processing apparatus or post-processing device. The camera image (still image) is not used for diagnostic purposes, but instead allows real-time monitoring of a patient during the diagnostic data acquisition.

Applicant acknowledges that the Herzog reference discloses the basic components of such a clinical system, but without any use of the aforementioned cameras. In the Herzog system, the apparatus for digital acquisition of optical images serves to stores these images together with the medical and patient-related

data. These images are used, for example, as a reference for the continuation of the treatment of a particular patient, or for supervision. These images can be retrieved, if appropriate entries are made at a processor, but there is no disclosure or suggestion in the Herzog reference, if and when these images are retrieved, to display the retrieved image in a window together with the examination image (mixed with the examination image on the monitor). Either the examination images or the aforementioned supervisory images are displayed in the Herzog reference.

The same is true of the Kraft reference.

In the Alexandrescu reference, one or more cameras are mounted at the ceiling, for example, of a room containing an imaging modality, and produce a 3D image of the examination apparatus as well as the examination personnel and the physician, for the purpose of preventing collisions between movable apparatus components and the people in the examination room. For this purpose, there is no need, and therefore no disclosure or suggestion in the Alexandrescu reference, to mix any images together, nor to display one image in a window together with another image. The images are only supplied to an evaluation device 14, which achieves the necessary and appropriate control of the medical apparatus. There is no need to visually reproduce any of these images for that purpose, and therefore modifying either of the Herzog or Kraft references in accordance with the teachings of the Alexandrescu reference would not result in a system as disclosed and claimed in the present application.

A fundamental difference between the subject matter disclosed and claimed in the present application and the prior art references relied upon by the Examiner is that in the inventive subject matter, for each imaging modality, images of the entire

modality are acquired and are reproduced in a window on a display monitor together with the examination image. The images are all displayed at a single console screen, rather than at a number of different screens, and thus allow real-time visualization of these images to support an examination procedure, as well as allowing video conferencing. None of the prior art reference discloses or suggests displaying images of any type for this purpose.

All claims of the application are therefore submitted to be in condition for allowance, and early reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Submitted by,

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IN THE DRAWINGS:

Figure 1 has been amended as shown on the revised sheet attached hereto.